

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE
National Urban League

REPORT ON CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY

January 23, 1952

MEMORANDUM

TO: Reginald A. Johnson, Director
Field Services
and
Julius A. Thomas, Director
Industrial Relations and Vocational Guidance

FROM: Roy E. Morris
Field Secretary

SUBJ: NUL-UCDS Exploratory survey of the Impact of the Defense
Emergency on Camden, New Jersey, and the Relationship of
Camden, New Jersey to the Social Problems Connected With
Developments in Bucks County - December 19, 1951.

.....

SUMMARY

Camden has had less over-all improvement in employment and production than its neighbors, Philadelphia and Trenton. However, it has experienced the same type of problems. Reductions in consumer lines released workers for increases of employment in some durable goods and heavy equipment lines. One difference between Camden and its neighbors is its relationship to agricultural fluctuations, and it is apparent that a substantial number of persons who are in-and-out of food harvesting and/or processing jobs will be available and looking for work in Bucks County - or will take local jobs vacated by others who have gone to work in Bucks County.

A brief analysis of the impact of the defense emergency on Camden is presented in terms of four basic factors, population, major employers, employment and selected social conditions.

POPULATION

Total (1950): 124,555, an increase of 6 per cent over 1940. Non-whites: 17,583, an increase of 40.2 per cent over 1940. Non-whites are 14.11 per cent of the total population.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

There are approximately 291 employers whose work is in the major occupational fields. They employ some 56,617 workers. Of those 291 employers, 168 have an appreciable amount of work considered essential to the defense effort, and they employ some 41,469 workers. There are 92 essential employers, each employing more than 30 workers, whose total employment is about 40,757. There are 76 essential employers, each employing fewer than 30 workers, whose total employment is about 720.

There are 11 employers employing more than 1,000 workers each. The top employers in the area are: Radio Corporation of America (11,000), New York Shipbuilding Corporation (6,000-7,000 employees), Campbell Soup (5,000), R. M. Hollingshead (2,000 employees), and Kieckhefer Container Company (1,200 employees).

The largest employed groups are members of the CIO, except those at the shipyards, which shifted to the AF of L some time ago.

Future Prospects:

Fleetway, Inc., plans a 7,000 (employees) expansion in Bristol. National Sheet and Tube Company will be located in the thoroughfare of Fallsbury - land options have been taken already. Both sides of the Delaware River are expected to develop rapidly with substantial employment increases for the area.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT CHANGES

In July, 1950, total employment was 115,300; unemployment stood at 9,300 - the lowest during preceding twenty months. Since that time, unemployment has dropped more or less steadily, but total employment has been very flexible, moving up and down by as many as 8,000 workers in a period of two months.

Changes in Employment and Unemployment Totals Since
The Outbreak of Korean War

	Employment	Unemployment
<u>1950</u>		
May	111,600	
July	115,300	9,300 *
September	124,700	6,900
November	118,700	7,500
<u>1951</u>		
January	114,700	8,800
March	116,800	6,800
July	117,300	5,600
September	125,500	5,100
November	116,200	5,800

*lowest point in 20 months.

Camden total employment is affected directly by agricultural fluctuations, extending as far as the processing line - as at Campbell Soup Company. However, almost 90 per cent of persons hired for temporary work in canneries and agriculture come from outside the area. Cannery workers come from surrounding areas including those in Pennsylvania; agricultural workers have come also from Puerto Rico and the southern states.

Occupational Shortages

Engineers for the electrical, chemical, and transportation equipment industries; draftsmen for the aircraft, fabricated metals, electrical, and chemical industry; machinists for the electrical, machinery, fabricated metals; for the transportation equipment industry, machinists and sheet metal workers; and stenographers and typists.

HOUSING AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Because of changes in the time schedule, caused by generally disrupted operations due to a snow and ice storm which held the area icebound for several days, housing and social services had to be omitted as focal points of investigation. In terms of housing, the personal views of two employment service officials were secured during a conference on related subjects. Their views are that housing is tight and is a problem needing attention. The personal views of two lay community leaders were all that was secured regarding the status of social services and their relationship with Negroes. It was felt that relationships (services to Negroes and the participation of Negroes in the administration of services) were not what should be expected. However, no specific information could be cited. (Anything further in this connection should include talks with Dr. Ulysses S. Wiggins and Mr. Robert Hazsawood.)

In-migration: It was stated generally, that there is a constant influx of in-migrants and that it will increase as both sides of the river include more and more production facilities.

cc: - Mr. Granger, Mr. Moss
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Jackson, Mr. Alston
Mr. Parris
Dr. Banner, Mr. Tucker
Mr. Pepe, Mr. Finley, Miss Tanneyhill